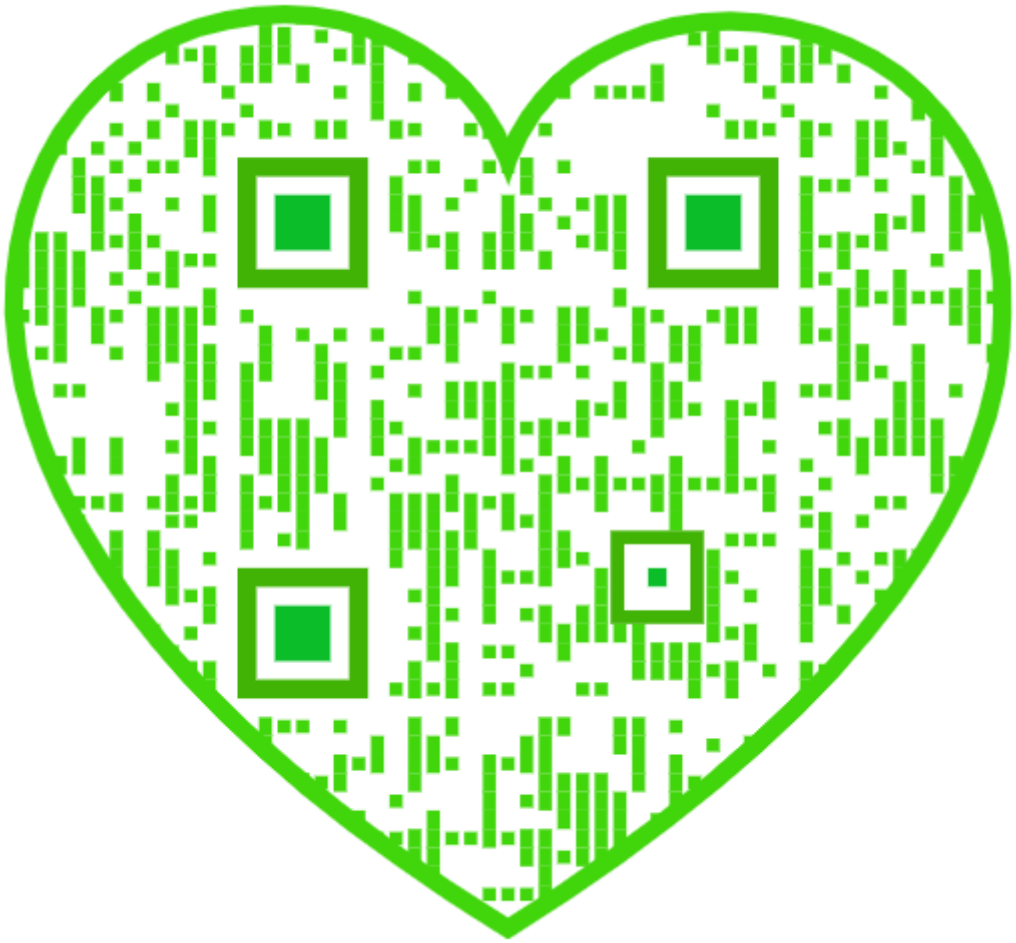

Class BJ47

Book .S82

PRINCIPLES

OF

Religion and Morality.

IN FOUR PARTS.

I. OF THE EVIDENCES OF RELIGION.
II. PRINCIPLES OF RELIGION.
III. PRINCIPLES OF MORALITY; WITH FOUR LESSONS ON THE CARDINAL VIRTUES.
IV. LESSONS ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

The whole in short Lessons, in the form of Dialogues; adapted to Schools, and private Instruction in Families.

Third Edition.—Improved with Copy Right.

BY CHARLES STEARNS, A. M.
Minister of the Gospel in Lincoln, Massachusetts.

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PREFACE.

THE Compiler of the following Dialogues made use of them, for many years, in his School, without the remotest idea of their publication. In process of time, numerous copies were taken of them in writing; and the manuscripts, written out for the use of the School, were almost defaced and destroyed.

He was accordingly reduced to the necessity, either of printing his little system, or renewing it in a number of manuscript copies, for the use of his scholars. Printing he found would be much the cheapest method. His school might thus be easily supplied; and, possibly, a few copies might sell elsewhere. With these ideas he committed the little work to the press.

He has here, for the facility of demonstration, reduced Religion to five great principles, which, he believes, comprehend the substance of that which has been true religion, in all ages and nations. Then has shewn how these apply to the Mosaic, and Christain dispensations. And how the idolatrous systems, as such, were altogether deviations from the great, and necessary principles of religion.

It will be easy for the discerning reader to see, how the peculiar doctrines of Christianity harmonize with, and promote the grand design of universal piety, and genuine religion. They shew wherefore men may safely confide in the mercy of God. Also the reason why, they who hear the gospel, must believe in Christ, as the Mediator, and the great Savior of men. And this without supposing, that all are necessarily

ly excluded from happiness, who never had it in their power to know Jesus by name.

He has considered the principles of religion in connection with its history; supposing that the history would throw light on its various dispensations; and shew the manner, in which, its principles have been displayed. When we find the principles of religion, which stand the shocks of various revolutions; and are equally benign and useful in all ages; then we need no longer doubt, whether we have found those which are true. I trust it must appear to persons of due consideration, that religion, since the fall of man, has always been the same. And that the religion of the holy scriptures, IS the proper religion of man. This will supersede a thousand frivolous disputes; and teach human egotists, that the collected wisdom of many ages and generations, contained in the scriptures, is superior to the opinions of a single ephemeron called a man. That being of yesterday—who is not sure of to-morrow. Reason in such a being, can do little; though it may do something. Certain knowledge of the truth is the result of much experience.

The Rev. H. Packard has given a very useful collection of religious and moral principles, in an easy method, well suited to the instruction of young children. *This* collection aims at the instruction of persons, whose minds are nearly arrived to maturity. It is suited to persons who are between 15 and 25 years of age. Schoolmasters, Preceptors, and Parents, may find it useful. Nay persons may instruct one another, who are of equal condition, by reciting to each other, and conversing on these subjects.—Studious individuals may, perhaps, use their leisure time, on Lord's Days, very profitably, by committing these principles to memory. Had not the compiler supposed these Lessons might prove useful he never would have committed them to the Public.

PRINCIPLES

OF

RELIGION and MORALITY.

PART I.

OF THE EVIDENCES OF RELIGION,
AND OF
CERTAIN DISTINGUISHED PERIODS OF TIME
WHICH ARE INTERESTING IN RESPECT
OF RELIGION.

Lesson I.

General Nature of the Proofs of Religion.

Preceptor, ON what does the proof of religion depend?

Student. Like all other matters of knowledge, on the clear evidence of truth.

P. How many kinds of evidence are there of religion?

S. Three. External, comparative, and internal.

P. What is the external evidence of religion?

S. Any fact recorded in history, a proof arising from the works of God, or from his providence, or, indeed, any thing which creates a belief of its reality and yet is not religion itself, makes a part of its external evidence.

P. What is the internal evidence of religion?

S. That which arises from the system itself; its principles being either evident in themselves, or capable of clear demonstration.

P. What is the comparative evidence of religion?

S. That which arises from comparing its principles with our state, our faculties, with our wants and our destination.

P. Will any evidence of religion arise from these comparisons?

S. Yes, certainly. If it be suitable to our state, harmonize with our faculties, relieve our wants, and make us wise, and good, it is true religion.

P. How will these evidences operate taken together?

S. Most happily. If certain religious principles be demonstrable in themselves; if they have been the religion of the wisest, and most virtuous men in every age; if the adoption of them makes men holy, virtuous, and happy, then we have all the evidence of the absolute truth of them which we need.

P. How comes it—when there are so many proofs of religion, that men do not regard it more?

S. Because they do not pay due attention to them. Proofs are of no avail; when they are not regarded.

Lesson II.

Of certain periods of time, which are interesting as they respect Religion.

P. INTO how many periods is the history of religion divided?

S. Into

S. Into four, each having its peculiar diſpenſation.

P. What was the firſt?

S. The ſtate of pure innocent nature, in which our firſt parents were bound ſimply to love and obey God. Some call this dispenſation the *covenant of works*. The duration of this period is uncertain.

P. What was the duration of the ſecond period?

S. From the apoſtacy of our firſt parents to the giving the law by Moſes, men believed in God, and kept the ways of the Lord. The ſpirit of this diſpenſation is expreſſed in the *covenant with Abraham*.—It may be called the period of the patriarchal religion.

P. Of what extent was the third period?

S. It reached from Moſes to Chriſt. The Jews received the law by Moſes, and this was called the *Moſaic diſpenſation*. Among the Gentiles was the reign of idolatry, as is teſtified by all hiſtorians.

P. What were Idols?

S. They were ſuppoſed repreſentations of the Deity, under ſome bodily ſhape, of man, or of a mere animal, wholly unworthy of the divine majeſty.

P. How far does the fourth period extend?

S. From the time of Chriſt down to the preſent day. Chriſtianity has prevailed, in many nations. It has been known, in ſome degree, by nearly all. Some ſtill remain Pagans.

P. What have been the principal cauſes which have checked the progreſs of Chriſtianity?

S. The progreſs of Mahometaniſm; the angry controverſies,

controverſies about doctrines and ceremonies; the errors of the Romiſh church; and more than all the wicked lives of Profeſſors.

P. Which is the beſt way to eſcape thoſe controverſies and thoſe errors, and lead us by truth to a good life?

S. To reduce the theory of religion to a few points, and thoſe as clear as poſſible.

Lesson III.

Of the clear and neceſſary principles of Religion.

P. WHAT are the principles of that religion which is neceſſary to man?

S. The two following principles are demonſtrable —viz. 1ſt That man ſhould love God. 2d. That he ſhould obey him. Theſe were neceſſary to man in a ſtate of innocence.

P. Are theſe principles ſtill neceſſary to man?

S. Certainly. And to him who is a ſinner, two other principles are equally neceſſary; That he ſhould believe in the divine mercy;—And that he repent of his ſins. Theſe alſo are demonſtrable.

P. And is there no other principle neceſſary in that religion which is eſſential to man?

S. Yes. That a man conſider himſelf as accountable to God, who will puniſh him if he do evil, or reward him if he do well.

P. Are theſe principles invariable?

S. Yes they undoubtedly are. And without theſe for its baſis, there can be no ſyſtem of religion.

P. How

P. How does it appear that none of these can be omitted ?

S. No one surely would leave out the love of God ; for that is the grand principle of all attachment to the Deity. If any say we need not obey him, that denies all religion at once. If a man owns God, and disobeys him, unless he believes that God is merciful he must be in a state of despair.

P. May not God make men happy though they continue in Sin ?

S. That is a contradiction, because sin is erring from happiness as well as duty. No sinner can be happy but by leaving sin. This makes repentance necessary.

P. But why need a man believe that God will treat him according to his works ?

S. Because the hope of escaping punishment, is the greatest incitement to sin ; and the denial of a reward, cuts off the principal encouragement to virtue.

P. How many principles are then necessary to the religion of such a being as man ?

S. Five at least ; 1st. Love to God. 2d, Obedience to him. 3d, Faith in his Mercy. 4th, Repentance of Sin. 5th, Belief that God will deal with him according to his works. So many principles at least are necessary in religion. How and when faith in Christ is necessary, we shew hereafter.

P. How does it appear that they are necessary ?

S. Because, if you take away any one of them, no real system of religion can remain. For religion

gion is nothing but the obligation of the ſoul of man to God.

Lesson IV.

Of hiſtorical evidence of Religion, and of the Scriptures more particularly.

P. HAVE the genuine principles of religion always been the ſame?

S. Faith in God's mercy, and repentance of ſin, could not take place in a ſtate of perfect innocence; but from the moment that men became ſinful; the above deſcribed necessary principles took place; and have, in all periods conſtituted, whatever there has been, of true religion.

P. By whom, according to hiſtory, have they been taught?

S. Firſt, by the Patriarchs; then by Moſes and the Jewiſh Prophets; and, after they long had been obſcured by Idolatry, they were revived by Jeſus Chriſt and taught by him in the most explicit manner.

P. Have not the ideas of religion varied among the nations in every age?

S. Yes. The ſyſtems of religion have been various; ſome more, ſome leſs remote from the abſolute truth. But, as truth is invariable, real religion hath always been the ſame.

P. Is not the variety of the modes of religion, an argument againſt the genuineneſs or reality of religion?

S. Not

S. Not any more than the variety of human forms is an argument againſt the reality of a human being.

P. What reaſon have Chriſtians to adopt the Bible as the ſtandard book of their religion?

S. This were a ſufficient reaſon, if no other, that, in the books of the old and new teſtament, the true neceſſary, and demonſtrable principles of religion are contained, and profeſſedly taught; which cannot be ſaid of any other ancient book whatever. Add to this, that every ſociety muſt have its ſtandard. And this is a ſtandard, in which the Chriſtians have been able to agree. They think alſo that the writers of it were moved by the good ſpirit of God.

P. What further uſe is there of the ſcriptures as the rule of faith?

S. They contain accounts of ſome remarkable works called miracles—If any think the teſtimony of theſe not ſufficient, yet the neceſſary principles are ſtill demonſtrable. To thoſe, who deem the teſtimony concerning miracles ſufficient, they prove the ſyſtem abſolutely divine. But we ſhall ſay more of miracles hereafter.

P. What further hiſtorical evidence have we of religion?

S. Hiſtory confirms, that nations, and individuals, who have acted on the neceſſary principles of religion, have been proſperous and happy; thoſe who have neglected them, have neither been happy nor proſperous.

Leſſon

Lesson V.

Of the internal evidences of Religion.

P. WHAT is the internal evidence of Religion ?

S. Its intuitive evidence at the first view, or the demonſtrability of its firſt principles ; with our clear diſcernment of its dignity, and utility. And indeed, the clearneſs of the conſequences which flow from the firſt principles, may be conſidered as a part of the internal evidence of religion.

P. Can the five grand principles you have mentioned be demonſtrated ?

S. Yes. But perhaps they are ſufficiently clear without it.

P. Nevertheless, I ſhould be happy to hear how you prove them. How do you prove that man ought to love God.

S. Man derives his exiſtence from God, and every degree of enjoyment is from him ; he ought to love the Being from whence all good is derived. Man ought to love God, becauſe God firſt loved man.

P. How does it appear that man ought to obey God ?

S. Becauſe, if a man love God, his obedience will follow ; and as God, has given man all his powers, faculties, and enjoyments ; they ought to be used as God pleases. Man is wholly dependent on God at every ſtep, and in every condition ; therefore, ſhould be always obedient to him.

P. But

P. But ſuppoſing a man be diſobedient to God and do wrong, muſt he believe in divine mercy?

S. That will become neceſſary. For he can never be in a capacity to accept, or improve, the mercy of God who does not believe in divine mercy; and that it may be obtained for his own benefit. No man ſeeks that which he does not believe to exiſt; nor ſtrives to uſe that which he does not ſuppoſe to be attainable, therefore without faith in God's mercy, we ſhall never ſee, or enjoy his favor—after having once offended him.

P. How do you prove the neceſſity of repentance?

S. The conduct of a man follows the prevailing inclination of his mind. A wicked man therefore will never leave his wickedneſs unleſs he repents of it. Repentance therefore is neceſſary as a principle of religion.

P. How does it appear that man is accountable to God?

S. From his reaſon which ſuppoſes a law, by which to govern himſelf. Man cannot govern man; but by his own conſent; nor even then, unleſs this conſent be bound by ſome ſuperior ſanction. It is neceſſary to have recourſe to the authority of God, to bind men to one another, in covenants, matters of office, &c. elſe no dependence can be placed on them, in caſes where there is no fear of human puniſhment. Hence it is neceſſary, that a man believe himſelf accountable to God. The remorſe or delight of the conſcience, the general ſucceſs of virtue, and, in many inſtances remarkable puniſhment of vice, prove the ſame point.

As do alſo our hopes and fears, reſpecting a world to come Further it is common to find thoſe who have no fear of God before their eyes, abandoning themſelves to all manner of wickedneſs.

P. Will not any clear conſequence of theſe principles be equally true?

S. Yes; and from theſe five, enough will flow to anſwer every purpoſe of religion.

P. Does morality depend on the ſentiment of religion?

S. It does principally; becauſe the law of God muſt give force to all human laws, and properly engage the mind to all ſentiments of duty.

Lesson VI.

Of the Comparative Evidence of Religion.

P. IS it any proof of religion that it ſuits with our ſtate, harmonizes our faculties, relieves our wants, and makes us wiſe, and good?

S. Certainly. For if it have all the effects which can be rationally expected, we need not doubt its reality, or efficacy.

P. How does it appear that religion is ſuited to the ſtate of man?

S. Becauſe it prevents us from ſinking under the miſeries of the preſent life. There would be no being ſo miſerable as man; without the hope inſpired by religion, and the morality built upon it. Human paſſions, aided by human reaſon, and unreſtrained by fear of God, make a hell of this world.

world. This is proved by the conduct of Atheistical nations. But religion makes us kind to one another, inspires us with fortitude, and ennobles our state, by presenting a career of virtue which ends in immortality.

P. How does religion harmonize our faculties?

S. In human beings the spiritual powers always impel to eminence and excellence; while the sensitive powers always impel them to excesses, utterly inconsistent with dignity. Hence a man without religion and morality, is at perpetual war with himself. But religion teaching man that he is subject to a Law above himself; and that his reason and his passions, answer the same purposes under that Law, brings his faculties into harmony among themselves, and directs them to the happiness of man, and the glory of his Maker.

P. How does religion relieve our wants?

S. Our greatest wants are want of comfort, and want of virtue. These religion supplies. It gives us comfort by showing all things by a most wise, and good Being conducted for the benefit of them that love him; and promising the most ample rewards to suffering piety and virtue; with divine support under afflictions; and the pardon of all sin, to them who sincerely repent; with kind reception when we return to God, and duty.

P. But how will religion supply us with virtue?

S. It has that very tendency, by bringing us into willing subjection to the great Ruler of the universe; and making us willing to obey his will, expressed in us, and all his works; and to be such persons, in all respects as we ought to be.

P. But will that make us, of consequence wise and good? S. Certainly;

S. Certainly ; for no courſe of life can be more wiſe than that, which is according to the very nature of things, eſtabliſhed by the ſupremely wiſe and powerful Author of nature. Or how ſhall man be more certainly good, than by following the precepts, and copying the example of HIM, who is perfect in goodneſs.

P. Have you any further confirmation of the ſentiments you have expreſſed ?

S. Yes. It is a fact, that Atheiſtical, and vicious men are never prudent for themſelves; and always are troubleſome to others.

Lesson VII.

Of the Chriſtian Religion.

P. WHAT evidence have we of the Chriſtian religion.

S. It has all the characters of the religion eſſential to man. Love of God. Obedience to his Laws. Faith of ſinners in God's mercy. Repentance of ſin, and the accountableneſs of men, to God, for their actions. Theſe are the expreſs doctrines of Chriſtians. They make the main ſubſtance of their religion.

P. What need was there of Chriſt's publiſhing theſe doctrines if they had been known before ?

S. Becauſe the Jews had corrupted their religion by traditions, and dependance on ceremonies ; and the Gentiles had entirely confounded their religion by the worſhip of idols. Chriſt came not to ſet up a new, and partial ſyſtem ; but to reſtore that which

which was in danger of being loſt; to revive true religion, and open the door of faith to the Gentiles.

P. Why did Chriſt call his doctrine a new commandment?

S. Becauſe it was hid from ages, and generations of men, immerſed in ſuperſtition, and Idolatry; and overlooked by the Jews attached to ceremonies. To perſons affected, in either of theſe ways, it would ſeem to be a new commandment.

P. Why then does Chriſt ſay, it is not a new commandment; but the ſame which had been heard from the beginning?

S. Becauſe Chriſt taught not any new ſyſtem of religion; but the unalterable principles of religious truth known to holy men of old. And this muſt ever be the right ſyſtem; becauſe it is founded in truth itſelf.

P. Does the authority of this religion depend on its being true, and correſpondent to nature and to the condition of man; or does it depend on its being revealed from Heaven?

S. It has both at its baſis, though it may ſafely depend on either.

P. How do you know that any perſon ever had a revelation from Heaven?

S. For this we muſt depend on teſtimony; but the perſons pretending to revelation may prove their teſtimony by miracles.—Their conſtancy in maintaining their point againſt every temptation and loſſes, even the loſs of life itself; and their having no temporal intereſt to ſerve by their aſſertions, greatly corroborate their teſtimony. But the grand teſtimony of actual revelation is that of miracles.

Lesson VIII.

Of Miracles as evidences of Religion.

Acts the whole book. Read in proof of this Section the history of the three first centuries after Christ, with the Lives of the twelve Apostles.

P. WHAT is a miracle?

S. It is an appearance in ſenſible objects, contrary to, or different from the common courſe of nature.

P. Is it not then impoſſible to believe that a miracle ever exiſted?

S. No, for unleſs we ſuppoſe ſome things to have taken place contrary to, or different from, the common courſe of nature, we muſt doubt of our own exiſtence.

P. Why doubt of our own exiſtence?

S. Becauſe we, to ſuppoſe our own exiſtence, muſt ſuppoſe firſt, the exiſtence of the world; which was created in time, and certainly the creation of a world; the coming of a man and a woman into exiſtence, in full perfection of body and mind, are things out of the common courſe of nature. Alſo the deluge, which is teſtified, both by the tradition and hiſtory, of all the ancient nations, was not according to the common courſe of nature.

P. But how can we believe a thing to happen, contrary to what we ſee in a thouſand inſtances?

S. Reaſonably, if it be atteſted by credible witneſſes. For inſtance, if ten thouſand men croſs a ferry, and not one of them is drowned; yet the drowning

drowning of the very next man is a poſſible thing; and may be proved by witneſſes.

P. Are we to look for miracles to happen frequently and on common occaſions?

S. No, but we may think it credible that they have been wrought on great and important occaſions, worthy the peculiar manifeſtation of divine power.

P. Of what uſe are miracles, with reſpect to truths, which you ſay are ſelf evident, or demonſtrable?

S. To diſſolve, by means of ſurprize, the powerful charm of ſuperſtition and error; to gain attention to the doctrines of religion, which, without the lively impreſſion of miracles, might have been as little regarded as the demonſtrations of Euclid, by thoſe very people, to whom this inſtruction was moſt neceſſary.

P. Is there not a very ſhort way to prove the religion of the Chriſtians?

S. Yes, by the reſurrection of Chriſt —For men who were with Jeſus in his life, who converſed with him forty days after his reſurrection, teſtified without any temporal intereſt to ſerve by it, and in defiance of every threatened puniſhment, that he ſo lived, and died, and roſe again, as is mentioned in the Scriptures.

P. Did they never fail in this teſtimony?

S. No, but all expoſed themſelves to death in defence of it, and moſt of them actually ſuffered it —Many others did the ſame, and left the ſtrongeſt teſtimonial proof of Chriſt's reſurrection that we have of any fact in ancient hiſtory.

PRINCIPLES

OF

RELIGION and MORALITY.

PART II.

PRINCIPLES OF RELIGION.

Lesson I.

Of the Being and Perfections of God.

Genesis—i & ii. Psalms—xix, civ. Romans—i, 19, 20. Cambray on divine Existence—*passim.* St. Pierre. Studies of Nature—*passim.*

P. HOW is the existence of God proved?

S. From the existence of the world, as every well built edifice must be supposed to have had a builder.

P. How does it appear that there is but one God?

S. Because all things natural are regular, and there is no real confusion in them; especially there is none which indicates contrary wills and powers to be concerned. Wherefore it is most rational to conclude, that they all proceed from one will and one power.

P. Why might not the universe be the mere effect of chance?

S. Because

S. Becauſe of the manifeſt order of the univerſe and harmony of its parts. Whereas order, and harmony do not belong to mere effects of chance.

P. What are we able to know concerning the perfections of God ?

S. That he is infinitely wiſe, good, powerful, and juſt.

P. How does it appear that he is wise ?

S. It is evident in the juſt, and accurate deſign, and contrivance of all things in the whole ſyſtem of nature.

P. How does it appear that he is good ?

S. From the various inſtances of his kindneſs, and benevolence to his creatures.

P. How do we know that he is powerful ?

S. From the amaſing effects of his power, which come frequently under our obſervation.

P. How do we know that he is juſt ?

S. We have preſent conviction of it in our own minds, in the ſatisfaction we have in doing good, and remorſe in doing evil.

P. What is the counſel of our reaſon concerning him, as a being poſſeſſed of theſe perfections ?

S. That it is best to ſubmit to his direction and diſpoſal.

P. What is our ſtate or condition with reſpect to him.

S. That of mere dependance.

Lesson

Lesson II.

Of the Exiſtence of Man, and his Relation to God.

Gen.—ii, iii, iv. Matt.—i, 18 verse to the end. John—iii, 16, 21. Eph.—i, 4.

P. HOW did mankind come into exiſtence at firſt?

S. One pair, at leaſt, of human beings, came into exiſtence by the immediate act of divine power.

P. What was the natural ſtate in which they exiſted at firſt?

S. In complete ſtate of body and mind.

P. What was their moral condition at firſt?

S. That of innocence and happineſs.

P. What was their duty towards their Maker, in that ſtate?

S. To love, and to obey him.

P. And did they do this?

S. No, but diſobeyed him, and of conſequence became miſerable.

P. What could rational beings have thought of their Maker, had he left them to the miſery which they brought on themſelves?

S. Only that he was uſt.

P. What then muſt we think of that procedure by which, they were put into a way of recovery?

S. It was the act, and diſpenſation of mere mercy.

P. By what means were they reſtored?

S. Through the eternal mercy of God, by the interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt.

P. And

P. And was this designed before it was manifested to man?

S. Yes, even from the foundation of the world.

P. Had our first parents any reason to believe that they might obtain favor of God, and be reconciled to him?

S. They had; because he told them, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.

Lesson III.

Of the Religion of the first Period. Or the Religion of Man in the state of Primitive Innocence.

Gen.—ii. Rom.—iii & v. Acts—xix & xx.

P. WHAT was the religion of man in the state of innocence?

S. It must consist in love to God; and obedience to him, performed by purely innocent beings.

P. Could they have any form of worship?

S. It is altogether probable, that they had. Since their love and veneration of the Deity must have expressed itself in speech, and outward actions.

P. Can purely innocent beings be capable of Repentance?

S. They cannot; because they have no sin.

P. Are they capable of faith in divine mercy?

S. They must have trust in divine goodness; but none, except a guilty person, is a proper subject of mercy.

P. Is not every man who sins a proper subject of repentance, and of faith in divine mercy.

S. Certainly;

S. Certainly; and can expect the divine favor in no other way.

P. Are not faith in divine mercy, and repentance of sin, the main doctrines of christianity?

S. They are, by the testimony of Christ, and the Apostles.

P. Is the religion of the period of innocence then suited to man in a state of sin?

S. It is not; because it excludes those things which are most necessary to the sinner, faith, and repentance—and rests in simple innocence of which a sinner is incapable.

P. Is it not then demonstrated, that Christianity is even necessary to man in his present state as a sinner?

S. To confess freely, it does appear to me that it is.

Lesson IV.

Of the Religion of the Patriarchal Age, or the Second Period of Religion.

Gen.—iv. viii. xiv. xv. Gospel John—xiv. Acts—ii, 38th Rom.—iv. Gal.—iii. Heb. xi.

P. IS not the state of human beings changed by the introduction of sin?

S. Certainly, and all men offend more or less. Yet, though offenders, they are under the hope of mercy.

P. What duties will become them in such a state?

S. That they should believe in the offers of mercy made to them. This, when directed immediately

mediately to the eternal Father, is called, faith in God—when it is by the inſtruction and mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, it is called faith in Chriſt; or faith in God by Chriſt.

P. Is nothing *more* neceſſary that a ſinner againſt GOD may be ſaved?

S. That they ſhould be ſincerely ſorry for, and forſake all their ſins. This is repentance; and he who ſincerely repents, will live in obedience to God.

P. Should not men, in the ſtate of ſinners under hope of ſalvation, worſhip God?

S. Paſt all doubt, and pay all due attention to the means provided for their recovery.

P. But are not faith, repentance, and conſequent obedience, principles of the Chriſtian religion?

S. Certainly.

P. Was then the religion of the Patriarchs the ſame in ſubſtance with the Chriſtian?

S. It appears that it was. The religion of Abel, for example, was the ſame with that of St. Paul.

P. What was the Patriarch's mode of worſhip?

S. They worſhipped God by prayers, and praiſes; and by the ſacrifice of innocent animals.

P. What did they mean by thoſe ſacrifices?

S. It is probable that they had reference to the great ſacrifice, which the Son of God ſhould make of himſelf for the ſins of men—ſince, paſt all doubt, ſacrifices were connected with the idea of reconciliation.

Lesson V.

The ſame Subject Continued.

Gen.—III, 15. v, 24. vii, 1. xlix. Deut.—xviii. 1st Epistle John—ii, 7, 8. Heb.—xi. Jude—14. 15.

P. DO you think that the ancient ſaints had any idea of the mercy of God through a Saviour?

S. There is great reaſon to ſuppoſe that they had.

P. Is it aſſerted concerning any of them, that they believed in God, and it was counted to them for righteouſneſs?

S. Certainly it was, from whence it appears that they obtained juſtification by their faith.

P. Did they ſhew any thing in their converſation ſimilar to chriſtian obedience?

S. They did. They walked with God. They were perfect in their generation. They were just men. They feared God. They commanded their children and their houſeholds after them, that they keep the way of the Lord; to do justice, and judgment.

P. Could any man receive benefit from the appointed Saviour before he was manifeſted to the world?

S. There is no difficulty in ſuppoſing this, any more than after his manifeſtation to the world; the difference being only in point of time, and ſome external circumſtances.

P. Had the ancient Saints any intimations of the coming of a Saviour into the world?

S. They

S. They had; and these were repeated from time to time.

P. Do you suppose they had any hope, or even idea of immortality?

S. Yes. For Enoch prophesied of the day of judgment. He was not on earth, for God took him; that is, to a state of reward for his piety. And the author of the epistle to the Hebrews expressly says, of the ancient worthies, that they sought a better country.

P. And by what means did they expect it?

S. By the intercession of the Messias. They endured as seeing him who is invisible.

P. What then is the difference between the religion of the first ages and ours?

S. Nothing in the main principles, the difference is only in point of time, and external circumstances.

P. Has there never been but one religion in the world?

S. But one true religion, since the fall of Adam, and that, the same in substance, as the Christian religion.

Lesson VI.

The third period of Religion, or the theocracy of the Jews opposed to the idolatry of the Gentiles.

1st. Of the corruption of the patriarchal religion by the introduction of idolatry.

Exod.—xx. Judges—xvii. 1 Kings—xviii. 2 Kings—xxi. Isa.—xliv. Ezek.—viii. Rom.—i. Homer's works—*passim.*

P. WHAT do you mean by idolatry?

S. The worship of God by means of images of men,

men, animals, &c. which images were ſuppoſed to repreſent the Deity, or ſome perfection of the Deity.

P. What was the firſt occaſion of idolatry?

S. It was occaſioned, in the firſt inſtance, by men's keeping images, or pictures, of their deceaſed friends, in their houſes.

[*Book of Wiſdom*, xiv.].

P. Was there not a remarkable kind of idolatry which originated in Egypt. [*Vid Univerſal Hiſtory and Teniſon on Idolatry.*]

S. There was. The moſt ancient religious books of the Egyptians, being written in figures of animals, inſtead of letters; thoſe figures, in proceſs of time, were taken for repreſentations of the Deity, and became objects of worſhip.

P. Were there not ſome nations who worſhipped the heavenly bodies?

S. Yes. The ſun, moon and ſtars, being objects, glorious in their appearance, were thought to be deities, or, at leaſt, repreſentations of the Deity.

P. Were there not ſome human perſons honored as Gods after death?

S. Among the Pagan nations, many perſons of uncommon characters, both men and women, were honored as Gods after death.

P. Did not idolatry ſometimes ariſe from conqueſt, and tyranny?

S. It did. Conquerors, and other tyrants commanded themſelves, or their favorites to be worſhipped.

P. Was not the worſhip of the Heathens, in moſt inſtances paid to dead men?

S. Yes,

S. Yes, to such as in their life were famous for dominion, arts, or virtues. But in some instances they worshipped devils, or evil spirits; and offered human sacrifices. [*Vid Homer, Virgil.*]

P. Were there not some among the heathen nations, who proposed the worship of new gods from selfish motives?

S. Some for the sake of gain, as in the example of Diana of the Ephesians. Some for the indulgence of the sensual passions, as Bacchus, Venus, &c.

P. What were the effects of idolatry on the minds of men?

S. They were pernicious in the extreme to those who received it. They became dreadfully superstitious and immoral. They sacrificed their children to false Gods. And while they lived in all lewdness, malice, and revenge, they pleaded the example of their Gods to justify all their crimes.

Lesson VII.

2d. Of the means by which the true religion was prevented from universal corruption.

Exodus—xx. ii. Chron.—vi. 1 Kings—viii. Acts—ii.

The Mosaic dispensation; and the establishment of the Temple of Solomon.

P. WAS the true God known to the Patriarchs?

S. Yes, he revealed himself to them very often.

P. What prevented the universal prevalence of idolatry?

S. The giving the law at mount Sinai, in which the worſhip of the true God was expreſsly enjoined; and idolatry ſtrictly forbidden.

P. What relation did the Jews ſuſtain with reſpect to him?

S. He revealed himſelf frequently to them by the prophets; he gave them the Ark of the teſtimony and eſtabliſhed the temple of Solomon among them.

P. Was the temple of Solomon erected to the ſuppoſed Deity of a particular place, or of one nation only?

S. By no means, but it was to the God of the univerſe, whom heaven, and the heaven of heavens could not contain.

P. Were the Jews the only people who could receive benefit by worſhipping at the temple?

S. They were not; but even the ſtranger afar off might receive benefit, by worſhipping the God, who reſided in the temple.

P. What then was the intention of eſtabliſhing the temple and its worſhip?

S. That it might prove a central point, to unite all people of the earth, who worſhipped the true God.

P. And did it in any meaſure anſwer this purpoſe?

S. Yes, on the famous day of Pentecoſt, there were collected thither devout people from every nation under heaven.

P. Then the Jewiſh or Moſaic diſpenſation was on the foundation of the religion eſſential to man?

S. Certainly.

S. Certainly. Love of God, and obedience to him were its basis—It held forth the necessity of believing, and trusting in the gracious, long suffering, and merciful God; and of reconciliation by sacrifice. It required repentance of sin, and shewed the benefit of repentance. It also contained most expressly the doctrine of man's accountableness to God. Since man's happiness in this life and his hope in death, are represented as depending on his serving the Lord; and being faithful in his commandments.

P. Then you suppose the Jews' religion to be divine?

S. Assuredly; for from whence should truth come but from the author of all truth.

Lesson VIII.

3d. Of means of religion which related to the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

Gen.—xiv. Book of Job—*passim.* 2 Chron.—xxxvi. Ezra—i. Daniel whole book. Hag.—ii. 9. Zech.—vi. 12. Micah—vi. 2. Prideaux Connection. Stackhouse History of the Bible.

P. WAS any thing done to preserve true religion among other nations.

S. There were eminent men among them whom God raised up. Such as Melchezideck and Job, who could testify of true religion, and the memory of whom was not lost after the day of Moses—They had the testimony of conscience and could observe the works and providence of God to awaken their hearts to religion.

P. Were

P. Were God's dealings with the Jews of any uſe to other nations?

S. He made the diſperſion of the Jews, and much more the re-aſſembling of them the means of making true religion known among other nations.

P. What think you of Daniel the prophet?

S. His reſidence, and propheſying in the courts of Babylon and Perſia, the remarkable events reſpecting him and his companions had a tendency to ſpread very far the knowledge of true religion.

P. Were not ſome of the great emperors and conquerors of the world, made inſtruments of propagating religion?

S. The remarkable converſion of Nebuchadnezzar, and his proclamation to all nations, that they ſhould honor the God of heaven—The proclamation of Cyrus to reſtore and build Jeruſalem, and the temple, were illuſtrious teſtimonies in favor of true religion.

P. What was done for the promotion of religion, between the time of reſtoring Jeruſalem and the time of Chriſt?

S. The temple was re-eſtabliſhed and the worſhip of God therein became frequented and venerable—The old Teſtament was compiled and acknowledged as the ſtandard of religion under the name of the Scriptures. Hence many proſelytes from other nations revered the true God, and worſhipped in the temple of the Jews.

P. While theſe things were doing, was nothing ſaid concerning Chriſt?

S. God by giving notice in the prophecies of his

his intention to ſend a remarkable perſon into the world to reſtore religion, kept alive the attention and hopes of pious perſons.

Lesson IX.

FOURTH PERIOD.

On the reſtoration of true religion by Jeſus Chriſt. The Chriſtian diſpenſation.

Matth.—i, 18 *ad finem.* Matth.—v, 13, &c. Idem.—xix, 3. &c. Rom.—iv, v, vi. Gal.—iii.

P. WHAT was the ſtate of religion when Chriſt came into the world ?

S. It was in the loweſt ſtate among the Gentiles, and greatly corrupted among the Jews.

P. What do the Scriptures ſay concerning his coming into the World ?

S. That he was born of a virgin, as foretold by the prophets.

P. Are there any wonders of God's power, previous to this, which prepare us to believe it ?

S. Yes. God no leſs wonderfully formed man from the clay, and made the woman from the ſubſtance of the man.

P. Had Chriſt any exiſtence before he was born of the virgin ?

S. The word, or wiſdom of God no doubt had exiſtence from eternity. When the word was made fleſh, or the wiſdom of God became incarnate ; that is, united to man in the fleſh, then exiſted that complete perſon, who is called Immanuel, Meſſias or Chriſt.

P. Why is he called the Mediator ?

S. Becauſe

S. Becauſe he conveys to us the merciful intentions of the Father, and offers our ſervices to God, ſo as to make peace between man and his Maker.

P. Why can there be but one Mediator?

S. Becauſe the ſuppoſition of many Mediators produces the ſame confuſion in religion, as the multiplicity of Gods.

P. For what purpoſe did he come into the world?

S. To ſave men from ſin; and, by that, from puniſhment. Which he did, by reſtoring true religion, by making atonement for ſin; and giving the holy ſpirit to purify them from ſin.

P. What is juſtification?

S. It is our being treated as juſt perſons in the ſight of God, although we have ſinned.

P. By what means do we obtain our juſtification before God?

S. By believing in God; if we know not Chriſt particularly, which Faith is counted to us for righteouſneſs.

P. How is it if we know Chriſt particularly?

S. If we believe in God, we muſt believe alſo in him.

P. Is there then ſuch merit in faith?

S. No, but God for Chriſt's ſake, Chriſt the righteous, Chriſt who made himſelf an offering for ſin, forgiveth our iniquities, and receiveth us graciouſly.

P. What is the benefit of juſtification?

S. That we have peace with God.

P. Does that peace terminate with this life?

S. No,

S. No, but we have hope of eternal glory.

P. And may men live as they pleaſe after their redemption ?

S. Nay, they are expreſsly redeemed that they may live to holineſs.

P. If belief in God may be counted for righteouſneſs ; why may not a man, in any nation, believe to the ſalvation of his ſoul ?

S. It becomes not us to determine in things belonging to God ; but we anſwer in the words of ſcripture : he that feareth God, and worketh righteouſneſs is accepted of him—" in every nation."

Lesson X.

Of Repentance, of Faith, and their conſequences.

Matth:—iii, 2, 8. Mark—i. Acts—xvii. & xx. John Gos. —iii. 1 Pet.—i, 23. Heb.—xi. James—ii. Phillip—iv, 8.

P. WHAT are the great and eſſential duties of every one, to whom the goſpel is preached ?

S. To repent and believe the goſpel.

P. Is repentance then neceſſary ?

S. It is, for if a man doth not repent of his ſins he will not forſake them.

P. What doth true repentance imply ?

S. It implies regeneration, or a real change of the heart from a bad to a good diſpoſition, by the influence of God's word and ſpirit.

P. What do you mean by the influence of God's word ?

S. The

S. The power of divine truth in teaching, convincing and perſuading the mind.

P. What do you mean by the influence of the divine ſpirit ?

S. That energy, or impulſe of divine power which leads men to repentance, and the acknowledgment of the truth.

P. Why is faith required of every one who ſeeks ſalvation ?

S. Becauſe he who does not believe in divine mercy, is not in a proper capacity, either to receive mercy, to be thankful for it, or improve it.

P. What is the reaſon that he who has heard of the Saviour ſhould believe in him ?

S. Becauſe as Chriſt is the very meſſenger of God's mercy to us, to reject his teſtimony, is generally, if not always, equivalent to rejecting ſalvation itſelf.

P. What are the fruits of true faith and repentance ?

S. Love to God and man reſtored in the heart, which ſhall be treated of in the principles of morality.

P. Are faith and repentance neceſſary to ſalvation ?

S. The ſcripture ſaith, that without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God. And except ſinners repent they ſhall periſh.

P. Does faith regard this life alone ?

S. No, it chiefly looketh at things unſeen and eternal.

P. Does Chriſtianity then comprehend the religion eſſential to man ?

S. It

S. It does with the greateſt advantage, teaching its doctrines expreſsly and fully. It teaches faith and repentance, in which Chriſt and his apoſtles ſum up chriſtianity. Repentance prepares the heart to love God, and obey his will: and it is clearly revealed that God will judge every man according to his works.

P. What are the peculiar excellencies of the Chriſtian religion?

S. That of all known ſyſtems, it creates the greateſt horror of ſin, the greateſt encouragement to virtue, and the ſtrongeſt motives to repentance, and a good life.

P. In what light ſhould the duties of morality be conſidered by Chriſtians?

S. They ought to be conſidered as connected with their religion. The law is adminiſtered by Chriſt, and whoſoever hath this hope purifieth himſelf even as God is pure.

Lesson XI.

Of Doctrines peculiar to Chriſtianity.

Iſa.—vi, 14. Matt.—i, 18. Matt.—xxviii. 1 Cor.—v, ix. Rev.—iii, 12. Rev.—xx, xxii. Acts—i. 1 Ep. John—i, 1.

P. WHAT are the doctrines which are peculiar to Chriſtianity?

S. They are ſummarily theſe that follow:

1. That Jeſus Chriſt is, in a ſenſe peculiar to himſelf, the ſon of God.

2. That he became incarnate, being born of the Virgin Mary.

3. That he made atonement for the ſins of men, by his ſufferings and death. So that by the righteouſneſs and paſſion of Chriſt, we have theremiſſion of ſins.

4. That for his ſake the Holy Ghoſt is given to be our comforter and guide, and to work in us the good pleaſure of the father.

5. That he dwelleth forever in heaven as the interceſſor of the ſaints with God.

6. That there will be a general reſurrection of the dead.

7. That there will be a day of Judgment, in which, all men ſhall be judged according to their works.

8. That the church of Chriſt is ONE. There being among the ſaints in all ages, and nations, certain common principles of union, and that theſe ſubſiſt between the ſaints in heaven, and in earth.

9. That the ſtate of future happineſs ſhall certainly be eternal.

P. What is the ſcripture doctrine concerning the future ſtate of the wicked.

S. The ſcripture threatens ſinners with everlaſting deſtruction; therefore, let us improve our preſent probation; and once ſaved, we ſhall be happy forever.

P. Are theſe peculiar doctrines ſufficiently proved?

S. The reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt proves that he was no impoſtor; and, he being a true witneſs, then theſe doctrines are certainly true.

Lesson

Lesson XII.

Of the Sacraments.

Matt.—xxvi, and xxviii. Acts—ii, 38. 1 Cor.—xi.

P. WHAT do you mean by a ſacrament?

S. It is a ſolemn public act conveying ſome important ſentiments concerning religion.

P. How many ſacraments are there?

S. Two; baptiſm, and the Lord's ſupper.

P. What is baptiſm?

S. It is the waſhing or ſprinkling a perſon with clean water, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt.

P. What is the meaning of this ſacrament?

S. It ſignifies that chriſtians muſt be purified from ſin, and for this reaſon, is a very fit ordinance to ſignify our firſt introduction to the chriſtian religion.

P. What is the ſacrament of the ſupper?

S. It is eating bread, and drinking wine, in a preſcribed form, in the name and remembrance of Chriſt.

P. What is the meaning of this ſacrament?

S. It ſignifies our affectionate remembrance of Chriſt, our brotherly affection to each other, and is a virtual ſolemn promiſe to abſtain from wickedneſs.

P. Who may receive this ſacrament?

S. All perſons who in rational ſuppoſition are Chriſtians.

P. Who are bound to attend this ſacrament?

S. All followers of Chriſt.

Lesson XIII.

Recapitulation.

P. WELL, now you have conſidered religion in four intereſting periods of the exiſtence of man, what do you think of it?

S. It appears that its eſſential principles are always the ſame, ſince ſin firſt entered into the world.

P. Do the differences between various diſpenſations deſtroy its genuine nature?

S. They do not, but each diſpenſation ſeems to be an improvement on that which preceded.

P. Can you think of any time, ſince ſin entered into the world, in which, any of thoſe, which we have conſidered as eſſential principles, could have been diſpenſed with?

S. I cannot. That it is always the duty of men to love and obey God is very certain. Nor can I doubt any more that it is the duty of him that hath done wrong, to repent of it. And there is this propriety in faith; that he who receives mercy ſhould be perſuaded of the bounty of the giver, and of the value of the gift, ſo that I can ſay nothing againſt it.

P. But what do you think of man's being accountable to God?

S. It ſeems ſo neceſſary that I doubt whether human ſociety can long ſubſiſt without it.

P. Now then let me aſk you whether you find theſe

S. Yes, and we ſhould attend it with the people among whom we live; if their mode of worſhip be not ſo abſurd as to offend againſt conſcience.

P. How ought men to be affected towards God?

S. They ſhould confide in divine Providence, or in other words, truſt in God.

P. In what light ought we to conſider the duties of morality?

S. Not as arbitrary impoſitions; but as regulations neceſſary for our good.

P. Is there not a ſyſtem of morality, which is conſidered as divine?

S. Yes, the Ten Commandments.* Rules reſpecting morality, worthy to be learned, remembered, and practiſed, by every human being.

P. Could not the commandments, or the moral rules of any ſyſtem, that is real, have been more convenient, and eaſy to be obſerved than they are?

S. Not unleſs our natures were altered; they being the conſequences of our being created as we are?

P. What is the final deſign, and proper uſe?

S. They lead us in the directeſt path to happineſs.

Lesson

* See Lessons on the Ten Commandments.

Lesson III.

The duties of a man respecting himself.

Psal.—xxxvii. Prov. vii, and xxiii Philipians—iv.

P. WHAT is a man's duty respecting his own life and estate?

S. He should use all lawful means to preserve both.

P. How should a man qualify himself with regard to the rest of human kind?

S. He should render himself capable of serving them.

P. What is necessary to preserve a man's personal dignity, and importance?

S. That he keep himself from all vices of the sensual kind.

P. Is it right that a man take measures to increase the good opinion of the public concerning himself?

S. He may take all lawful means, and perhaps ought to do it.

P. What is the readiest way to attain a good character?

S. The surest and most certain way to attain a good character is, TO BE GOOD.

P. What would be the consequence if each individual should neglect the rules of morality?

S. It would be the destruction of all society.

P. Are the rules of morality the same for both sexes?

S. They

S. They are, very nearly.

P. Do both ſexes ſuffer equally by violating the rules of morality ?

S. They do not. The women ſuffer much more by their immoralities than the men.

P. What reaſon can you aſſign for this ?

S. Women are more confined in their ſituation, and leſs independent than men.

Lesson IV.

The third branch of Morality, or Duties to our fellow Men.

Gen. xvii, 19. Ex.---xx. Deut.---xxx, 46. Prov.---i, ii. Psal.---xv. Eph.---vi.

P. HOW are theſe duties divided ?

S. Into two claſſes, 1ſt. Relative duties. 2d, Social duties, not founded on domeſtic relations.

P. What are relative duties ?

S. Thoſe founded on domeſtic or other peculiarly intereſting relations.

P. The kinds of them. How are they diſtinguiſhed ?

S. We ſhall reduce them to three ſorts, between parents and children. Between husbands and wives. And the duties between friends.

1st CLASS OF RELATIVE DUTIES BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

THE DUTIES OF PARENTS TO THEIR CHILDREN.

P. WHAT are the principles, which conſtitute the foundation of parental duties ?

S. The relation which parents bear to children, as

as to their exiſtence, the tender affections of parents, and the dependent ſtate of children.

P. What duties ſhould parents perform towards their children ?

S. They ſhould ſupply all their real wants if they be able, protect them from violence, endeavor to preſerve their health and ſecure their welfare. They ſhould educate them to piety, to virtue, and the uſeful arts.

P. Have parents any right to diminiſh the real happineſs of their children ?

S. They have not, and we believe very few would wiſh to do it.

P. What ſhould be their view then in any reſtrictions which they may ſee cauſe to lay upon them ?

S. The good of their children ; that the preſent ſufferings of their children, ſhould be recompenſed by far greater good in time to come.

P. How ſhould parents conduct themſelves with regard to the marriages of their children ?

S. They have no right to compel their children to marry, or to abſtain from marriage. They do wrong when they urge, or ſtrongly tempt them to marry a perſon not beloved. Even while their children, are minors, it may not be prudent to forbid them marrying, when they have a proſpect of being happy : they ought to give their children wiſe counſels ; but let them marry according to their own choice.

P. Have parents any right utterly to abandon their children ?

S. In one caſe only, which is hardly ſuppoſable, when

when they are in danger of losing life by means of their children?

P. Why may not parents abandon their children for any act of disobedience?

S. 1, Because they have no right to destroy them, or leave them to be destroyed.

2. The parents cannot impose the care of their children on other persons.

3. They have no right to cut them off from the means and motives of reformation. The Almighty claims no right to reject a repenting and a returning sinner. Yet a parent has a right to reduce a notoriously disobedient child to the mere necessaries of life.

Lesson V.

The duties of Children to Parents.

Exod.---xx. Eph.---vi. Luke---ii, 51. John---xix, 26.

P. WHAT duties do children owe to their parents?

S. At all times to treat them with affection, and respect, and obey all their commands, which are not absolutely cruel, wicked, and unreasonable.

P. Do they owe any duties of obedience to their parents, when they are out of their minority?

S. If they remain in the family with their parents, they ought to comply with the general rules, and orders of the family. They ought, also, if able, and their parents need it, to maintain their parents in old age.

P. Have children a right to marry without their parents conſent ?

S. During their minority they have not : after that, the parent retains no more right of compulſion, or prohibition, in that, than any thing elſe.

P. By what means ſhall young perſons, in the age of inexperience, be ſecured from making an unhappy choice of partners, for the marriage ſtate ?

S. By acting with conſideration in all things not being married haſtily, by thoroughly learning the public characters of the perſons whom they propoſe to marry ; and being well aſſured that they are not contaminated with any remarkable vice.

P. But are they to omit all regard to the advice, and counſels of their parents, in a matter of ſo much conſequence ?

S. By no means. Children ſhould always ſeek to be in perfectly good intelligence with their parents, reſpecting the perſons they intend to marry. They ſhould liſten to good advice, and let it have its full weight. And if it be poſſible, marry with the complete approbation of their parents, and friends. Becauſe, to do otherwiſe, tends to interrupt that harmony, and delightful intercourſe, which ought to take place among family relations.

Lesson VI.

2d. Claſs of relative duties.

Of Husbands and Wives, or, the moral laws of marriage.

Gen.—ii. Prov.—v. Matth.—xix, 3—10. 2 Cor. vi. and vii. Eph.—v. Titus—ii. Heb.—xii.

P. IN what light ſhould married perſons conſider their faith mutually pledged in their marriage?

S. As a moſt ſacred and ſolemn compact, never on any occaſion to be violated.

P. As we conſider perſons as being related to civil ſociety. Can a private, unwitneſſed contract between a man and woman, conſtitute a marriage?

S. It cannot. 1. Becauſe it cannot be proved, ſhould either of the parties deny it. Therefore 2d. the reputation of the parties cannot be ſecure. 3d. A woman's maintenance cannot be ſecured. 4th. Nor her offspring be conſidered as legitimate.

P. What ſhould be a point of prudence in this particular, and more eſpecially for women?

S. To conſider no agreement as a marriage, but that which is ſtrictly ſo, according to law.

P. What are the obligations of perſons married to each other in regard to property?

S. Their endeavors ſhould be mutual to preſerve and increaſe their eſtate. It ſhould be the property of both, and neither ſhould ſpend it wantonly.

P. What

P. What is that principle by which the happineſs of the married ſtate is made certain ?

S. By a mutual and conſtant deſire, in the parties to pleaſe each other ; in all things conſiſtent with their duty to other perſons.

P. By what means is the happineſs of marriage moſt impeded, and often deſtroyed ?

S. By an indiſcreet reſolution of the parties, each to be indulged in particular caprices, and humours.

P. What ſhould be the active principle of government in families ?

S. The united influence of both parents when both are capable, and both living.

P. Which of the parties in the marriage ſtate ought to have the predominant influence in the affairs of the family ?

A. This is a queſtion of ſome delicacy. We believe that the ſcriptures give it to the man.— "The head of the woman is the man." Superior force ſeems to indicate controul, and the man ought to be the moſt capable of exerciſing it. This, however, is not always the caſe, and the good of the family requires that ability ſhould govern. Sometimes the laws interfere, in either caſe there is no need of diſpute, for it is an eternal order in the ſyſtem of providence, that the party which has the beſt command of temper, and acts moſt rationally ſhould have the greateſt influence in the affairs of the family.

Lesson VII.

3d Claſs of Relative Duties.

Duties of Friends.

Gen.—xiii. Ruth—ii. 1 Sam.—xx. Luke—x, xviii.

P. WHAT are the reciprocal duties of friends?

S. Secrecy in all things reſpecting their friendſhip which are improper to be revealed, ſteady and invariable attention to each other's intereſt and happineſs; and, in every reſpect, ſtrict fidelity to each other.

P. What are the duties of brethren and ſiſters?

S. The duties of ſuch are preciſely the ſame with thoſe of friends; except the difference made by natural relation, which peculiarly animates the deſigns of benevolence. Perſons attached with a view to marriage, or whoſe intereſts are any way neceſſarily connected, are ſubject to the laws of friendſhip.

P. What are the duties of neighbors?

S. They are a kind of friends, who ſhould endeavor always to preſerve peace, and good will between themſelves. They ſhould greatly revere each other's rights; they ſhould mutually pay attention to, and aſſiſt each other, in ſickneſs, and unuſual calamities.

P. What is the indiſpenſable principle of friendſhip?

S. To ſeek the real good of the perſon to whom

friendſhip is profeſſed. Genuine love worketh no ill to his neighbor. To injure a perſon under the pretence of friendſhip, or love, is the extreme of perfidy.

P. Are there not relative duties between maſters and ſervants?

S. In free ſtates there are no ſervants, but ſuch as ſerve voluntarily for a limited time. Their duties are defined by the contracts which they make with their employers. The ſame contract is alſo a rule to thoſe whom they ſerve.

P. What is neceſſary to all the relations of life?

S. That we endeavor to underſtand well, and punctually to execute the duties of all, in which we are concerned. Such is the character of the man of probity and worth.

P. Are there not reciprocal duties of rulers and citizens?

S. Yes. Rulers are always bound to act according to the true intent of their office. And citizens are bound in conſcience to obey lawful authority. But theſe perhaps ſhould be ranked with ſocial duties of a larger extent.

Lesson VIII.

Second kind of duties to our fellow men, or, ſocial duties of a larger extent than domeſtic relations.

P. WHAT is a ſtate or republic?

S. An aſſociation of a large body of men under common laws, with a view to the common good.

P. What

P. What is our duty to the ſtate, or republic?

S. To ſubmit to, and obey all laws regularly expreſſing the will of the majority—and ordained for the common good. The will of towns, cities or other regular ſocieties known in law, muſt be obeyed alſo. Rom. xiii.

P. What are thoſe virtues which tend to build up human ſociety?

S. A proper ſenſe of juſtice, and of the utility of public order; a diſpoſition to promote the public good or at leaſt to be quiet in our own ſphere, and mind chiefly our proper buſineſs.

2 Chron.—xix.

P. What are thoſe vices which have a peculiar tendency to deſtroy ſociety?

S. All vices have this tendency; but eſpecially a rough diſorderly ſpirit, ſelfiſhneſs, a diſpoſition to meddle with things which belong not to us; but above all, lawleſs and unbounded ambition. Theſe ſhould be avoided, and we ſhould learn and practice the principal heads of ſocial duty.

2 Sam.—xv. 2 Kings—vii, 7th &c. Acts—xix.

P. What is juſtice?

S. The virtue by which we wrong no one; but render all their dues, in public or private ſtations.

Rom.—xiii, 7th &c.

P. What is fidelity or good faith?

S. The virtue by which we fulfil all our voluntary contracts to the utmoſt of our ability.

Pſalm—xv. 4.

P. What is honeſty, or probity?

S. The virtue by which we diſdain to cheat or deceive any man; and ſpeak, and act with candor, and ſincerity. Pſalm—xv.

P. What

P. What is patriotism?

S. The virtue by which we honor, and love, and obey our own lawful government; and endeavor to promote the honor, and real felicity of our republic, as much as may be.

Psalm—lxxxvii. cxxxvii. Lamentations—*passim*. Matt.—xxiii, 37. Rom.—x.

P. What is liberality?

S. A disposition to relieve the necessitous by money or services, on all proper occasions.

Prov.—xi. 24, 25.

P. What is humanity?

S. The virtue by which we compassionate and assist the distressed.

Luke—10. 1 Ep. John—iii.

P. What constitutes property?

S. It is sometimes given providentially to men, and then first possession makes property:—sometimes by inheritance by the will of the donor or the laws of society, respecting purchases. In the common goods of providence when any man before all others annexes his labor, or attention to any thing, he makes it his property.

Gen.—xxiii, and xxvi. 1 Kings—xxi.

P. If one man has a full right to enjoy any thing, can another innocently deprive him of it?

S. No. A man has as good a right to take another's money as to deprive him of any thing else, to which his claim is complete.

1 Kings—xxi.

P. What duties do we owe to mankind at large?

S. We must never injure any of the human species, but do all men all the good we can.

Lesson

Lesson IX.

On the connection between Religion and Morality.

P. WHAT is the great maxim concerning this point ?

S. That there can be no true religion without morality ; nor any true morality without religion ?

P. Why is it thus ?

S. Becauſe a ſentiment of religion only can bind the conſcience ; and good deeds only can prove the reality of religious ſentiment.

P. What does real morality always pre-ſuppoſe ?

S. That the laws of God, are duly publiſhed, and of ſufficient authority.

P. Why is religion alone ſufficient to eſtabliſh the moral ſyſtem ?

S. Becauſe 1ſt, it promiſes a reward in all caſes ſufficient.

2d. Threatens a puniſhment more than ſufficient, if duly conſidered, to balance the motives to any crime.

3d. Arms us with ſufficient cautions, and aſſiſtance, to reſiſt any temptations.

P. Is not the principle of honor ſufficient to ſupport morality ?

S. It is not, becauſe honor depends wholly on public opinion, which is variable, and often wrong.

P. Why might not ſelf intereſt do it ?

S. Becauſe it is often on the contrary ſide, and oppoſed to virtue.

P. How

P. How is it that the worſhip of the Deity binds the bands of ſociety, and makes men act rightly towards one another?

S. Becauſe it gives men a common ſtandard of right to which they all ſubmit, and in which all agree, THE WILL OF THE SUPREME BEING.

FOUR LESSONS

ON THE FOUR CARDINAL VIRTUES.

What are the four Cardinal Virtues? They are Juſtice, Temperance, Fortitude and Prudence.

Lesson I.

Of Juſtice.

P. WHAT is juſtice?

S. It is that virtue by which we abſtain from injury to any perſon whatever, and render to all their dues.

P. Why is juſtice placed at the head of the ſocial virtues?

S. Becauſe it has perfect rectitude for its object, and ſtandard. And by giving to every one his due, peace in human ſociety is beſt maintained. By it also our perſons, property, and rights are ſecured from harm.

P. Muſt not it be extremely uſeful?

S. Nay more it is neceſſary. For a perſon deſtitute of juſtice cannot poſſeſs any other virtue, in any great degree.

P. Is not veracity neceſſary to juſtice?

S. Yes, for perſons and things muſt be repreſented in a proper light, elſe every one cannot have his due.

P. Doth

P. Doth not juſtice preſuppoſe ſincerity?

S. Certainly, becauſe without real intention and deſire, it is not probable that we ſhould do right reſpecting ourſelves, our neighbor, or our God.

P. In what caſes does the utility of juſtice appear?

S. In all caſes, and at all times; but moſt of all the affairs of the commonwealth.

P. Then you would not approve that, in ſtate affairs, we ſhould do that which is really wrong, to promote the public good.

S. The very idea is abſurd, and the attempt prepoſterous. Hence they who do things properly unjuſt, to promote what they call the public good, deſerve the deteſtation of human kind.

P. Does not juſtice regard the affections of the heart, as well as our outward rights, and property?

S. Yes, and they ſhould be given to thoſe perſons to whom they properly belong.

P. But is this poſſible?

S. In moſt caſes it is completely in our power; for the habit of treating a perſon well, will create love to that perſon, as the habit of treating a perſon ill, will create hatred.

P. Is liberality conſiſtent with juſtice?

S. It is in ſome ſenſe a part of it. For it is certainly right to beſtow our donations on proper objects.

P. But is a man bound to liberality as to abſolute juſtice?

S. He is not; for to give away that which he cannot afford to give, would be injurious to himſelf, and family.

P. Is

P. Is not mercy inconſiſtent with juſtice?

S. It may be contrary to the letter of a particular law; but not to the general ſpirit of juſtice, if mercy be extended to proper objects.

Lesson II.

Of Temperance.

P. WHAT is temperance?

S. It is that virtue, by which we abſtain from all unlawful pleaſures; and all violent exceſſes of the paſſions.

P. What pleaſures, and what paſſions are unlawful?

S. All which tend to bring real evil on ourſelves, or others; or which unfit us for the good of ſociety.

P. Is not temperance a great diminution of human happineſs.

S. By no means. It promotes it exceedingly.

P. Can this be made evident?

S. Yes, if we will only conſider, that it preſerves our faculties in their proper order, by which means, our lawful enjoyments become the more delicious. It alſo creates a ſenſe of dignity, which enables us to anticipate delight, or reflect on it with pleaſure, and with the fulleſt approbation of the mind, and conſcience.

P. What are the effects of intemperance?

S. It ruins our natural powers; creates diſguſt and remorſe; excites the reſentment of injured

perſons, brutalizes our diſpoſition, and renders us infamous. It often brings on diſeaſes and death.

P. Are then perſons who are ſtrictly virtuous, more happy, than they who ſet no limits to their deſires?

S. They certainly are. Temperance is to all the enjoyments of life, what neatneſs, order and elegance are to a feaſt. It gives them their higheſt reliſh.

P. Does temperance require us to abſtain from thoſe enjoyments of life which are altogether innocent?

S. No, but only from ſuch as are hurtful.

P. What are nobleſt among the pleaſures of ſenſation?

S. The kind and benevolent affections of the heart. Theſe are incapable of ſatiety, or diſguſt, even in the preſent life.

P. What are the moſt excellent, and ſublime of all human enjoyments?

S. The pleaſures of knowledge, virtue and piety. Theſe never ceaſe but with our exiſtence.

P. May we not reaſonbly conjecture, that the happineſs promiſed by religion conſiſts in theſe?

S. We cannot tell preciſely what it conſiſts in, but it is very probable, that knowledge, virtue, and piety, exalted to the higheſt degree, make no ſmall part of the happineſs of heaven.

Lesson

Lesson III.

On Fortitude.

P. WHAT is fortitude?

S. It is that virtue, by which, we encounter dangers with firmneſs of mind, or patiently endure ſufferings.

P. It ſeems then that fortitude has two objects?

S. When it contemplates or encounters danger calmly, it is called courage. When it endures pain it is called patience?

P. Have women as much fortitude as men?

S. It is ſuppoſed by ſome philoſophers, that they have. That if they have leſs courage, they have more patience.

P. What is the uſe of courage?

S. To aſſiſt in defending ourſelves from aſſaults and injuries.

P. Are malice, envy, or deſperation any parts of true courage?

S. They certainly are not; but are mere vices and weakneſſes of the mind.

P. Which is to be preferred, courage, or patience?

S. It is somewhat uncertain. Courage ſerves us in the moſt extraordinary caſes; but patience is the moſt conſtantly uſeful.

P. What is reſolution?

S. It is a virtue ſeemingly compounded of patience and courage; by which, we firmly carry any point we aim at to complete ſucceſs.

P. What

P. What is the uſe of reſolution ?

S. Its uſes are various ; but especially to prevent the exceſſes of the ſofter paſſions.

P. What is the uſe of patience ?

S. It ſerves to reſtrain violent reſentments, and to prevent our ſufferings from entering too deeply into the heart, and producing diſcontent. It renders an afflicted perſon amiable, and reſpectable, in the view of thoſe, who behold his ſufferings.

P. What is the nobleſt inſtance of courage ?

S. A determined oppoſition to the popular and faſhionable vices of the age.

P. What is the nobleſt inſtance of patience ?

S. When we perſevere in the moſt difficult duties, while their reward ſeems at a diſtance.

Lesson IV.

On Prudence.

P. WHAT is prudence ?

S. It is that virtue by which we avoid cenſure ; or ſecure ourſelves from other harm.

P. Of what uſe is prudence ?

S. Our intentions being ſuppoſed good, it ſecures the good opinion of other perſons, and removes thoſe obſtacles, which hinder the accompliſhment of our juſt deſigns, and prevents our ſuffering in conſequence of virtuous actions.

P. Is it our duty to avoid in the ways of virtue ſuch ſufferings as may be avoided ?

S. Yes, it certainly is, for we have a right to ſelf preſervation.

P. Is

P. Is there not ſtill further uſe for prudence ?

S. Yes, in avoiding the occaſions of vice, and finding opportunities and advantages for the practice of virtue.

P. When many evils preſent, and one muſt inevitably be choſen. What is the point of prudence ?

S. It is the office of prudence to chuſe the leaſt in ſuch a caſe ; but never to chuſe evil, natural, or moral, if it can be avoided.

P. Does prudence require us abſolutely to avoid all incentives to vice ?

S. Not abſolutely, for then we muſt needs go out of the world, but it requires us punctually to attend the buſineſs of life, and not without great, and juſt cauſe, expoſe ourſelves to temptations.

P. Does not prudence require the utter extirpation of the paſſions ?

S. No, but the proper management of them ?

P. By what means are the paſſions moſt eaſily managed ?

S. By finding means to let them take an innocent courſe, as an inundation of waters is beſt prevented, not by ſtopping the ſtream ; but by giving it a free and ſafe channel. Paſſions which muſt not be indulged at all, muſt be cured by conſideration, or by counter paſſions ; that is by oppoſing one paſſion to another.

P. What are the ſubordinate qualities aſſiſtant to prudence ?

S. 1ſt, Decency in ſpeech and behavior. 2d, Politeneſs, or the art of pleaſing. 3d, Moderation in oppoſition to raſhneſs. 4th, diſcretion, or

the power of diſtinguiſhing between good and bad conduct. 5th, Conſideration, or weighing the different conſequences of human actions.

P. Does prudence regard ourſelves only?

S. Certainly it does not, but avoids the evils which may ariſe from our conduct to other perſons, and chiefly aims at the approbation of the Supreme Being.

P. What is the higheſt point of prudence?

S. To conduct ourſelves ſo, in this life, that we may have a reaſonable hope of being happy forever.

Methods of Instruction.

ON THESE PRINCIPLES.

THE preceptor of any ſchool, or any perſon of abilities will eaſily perceive that many of the ſingle principles, taken up in the above dialogues, are of great extent. A ſingle propoſition might afford ſufficient matter for a paraphraſe, a commentary, a new dialogue, or even a lecture. The inſtructor, for the time, will chooſe his own method. But the compiler of theſe dialogues, though he has occaſionally made uſe of all the methods above mentioned, thinks he has cauſe to ſay, that the inſtituting of a new dialogue, is the beſt for general uſe.

For example. If the ſtudent appear not to comprehend the meaning of this propoſition, we have preſent conviction of the juſtice of God, in the ſatisfaction we feel in doing good, and remorſe in

in doing evil. Then the inſtructor make it very clear, by reſolving it into a new dialogue, thus:

P. What are the feelings of any one's mind being conſcious of having done that which is evidently wrong, fooliſh, or wicked?

S. I ſuppoſe they muſt be very diſagreeable.

P. What muſt they be when one does that which is known to be generous, good, excellent?

S. I am ſure they muſt be very agreeable.

P. Is not the neceſſity of having theſe feelings as much the work of God; as the ſhape of a man's body, or any of his natural powers?

S. Yes. It certainly muſt be, there is no denying it.

P. If a man then ſuffers by his ſins, from the hand of God, and cannot avoid it; what do you call that treatment of him?

S. I call it puniſhing him.

P. When man by the ſame neceſſity, receives happineſs from the hand of God, what is that?

S. It is rewarding him.

P. Which of the perfections of God is concerned in rewarding the good, and puniſhing the wicked?

S. It is, undeniably, the work of his juſtice.

P. What would be the concluſion, which your mind would draw from all theſe propoſitions, taken together?

S. I muſt needs ſay: that it appears to me clearly demonſtrated, that God is juſt, and hath given ſenſible proof of it, in "the ſatisfaction we feel in doing good, and remorſe in doing evil."

Second

SECOND EXAMPLE.

THE act or habit of repentance is neceſſary, ſince he who ſtill loves his ſins will not forſake them.

P. What principle is that which a man always acts upon?

S. When a man acts quite freely without coercion or urgency, he always acts agreeably to his own inclination.

P. If a man then incline to commit ſin, he will commit it?

S. Certainly, if this be his prevailing inclination.

P. But if he change his mind concerning it, ſo that he inclines to it no more, the very idea being bitter, and offenſive to him?

S. He will commit ſin no longer.

P. What is repentance?

S. It is the very change of a man's mind, by which ſin becomes the object of his ſorrow, his loathing and regret.

P. Then the repenting man will not commit ſin.

S. He will not.

P. Does the morality of human actions admit of any medium between repenting of ſin, and not repenting of it; inclining to ſin, or not inclining to it?

S. It does not.

P. Is it not then plain that the repenting ſinner will forſake ſin; the unrepenting will not?

S. As

S. As plain as it is poſſible for any thing to be.

P. What concluſion neceſſarily then follows?

S. That repentance is neceſſary; ſince he who repents of ſin will forſake it, but he who does not repent, will not.

THIRD EXAMPLE.

HOW does the principle of ſociability manifeſt itſelf?

If this queſtion be not ſufficiently underſtood, it may be reſolved into a number of others.

P. Is any man perfectly indifferent to the ſentiments and ſpeeches of others?

S. I cannot anſwer that queſtion in a moment, I muſt think on it a little.

P. Suppoſe then it were juſt as easy, in every view, to make men think and ſpeak well of you, as ill? Which would you prefer?

S. I do not heſitate to ſay that, I ſhould prefer, that they ſhould think, and ſpeak well of me.

P. Then you depend on ſociety for a part of your happineſs?

S. I muſt, indeed confeſs that I do.

P. Let me then queſtion you, my friend, a little further. Had you all the wealth you could deſire, would you not wiſh that ſomebody elſe ſhould know it?

S. Yes, and enjoy it too. That is one of the greateſt bleſſings of wealth, to be magnificent, and generous, in the view of one's friends.

P. Then even the rich depend on their neighbors

bors, for a part of the enjoyment of their wealth?

S. It must be so. The sense which others have of our magnificence, and grandeur, is one of our greatest enjoyments arising from wealth.

P. Are not our joys, of every kind, increased by being communicated to some confidential friend?

S. They certainly are. This is mere matter of fact, and experience.

P. Do we not also feel a sympathy of joy, and of sorrow, in observing those affections in other persons?

S. We do, and by compassion are led to assist the distressed.

P. Is there not then a distinct principle of sociability, which, according to nature forms a part of the moral character of man?

S. I cannot deny it; the proofs appear plain and decisive.

P. Then we must not act merely for ourselves in this life?

S. No, we must pay a sacred regard to the rights of our neighbor; and even love him as ourselves, if we would be happy; since genuine self love and social, are original principles of man's nature.

LESSONS

ON THE

TEN COMMANDMENTS.

Lesson I.

THE INTRODUCTION.

Q. WHAT are the Ten Commandments?

A. Ten remarkable Laws proclaimed by God Almighty, from Mount Sinai, to the children of Iſrael.

Q. What appears to have been the deſign of Almighty God in publiſhing thoſe Laws?

A. To give his choſen people, and by their means to other nations, a moral ſyſtem, the moſt conciſe, and yet the moſt perfect ever known among men.

Q. Do the commandments forbid crimes, or enjoin duties only in the higheſt degree?

A. No. But in forbidding crimes, or enjoining duties, they comprehend all things of like kind, in whatever degree?

Q. How are you aſſured of this?

A. We have direct aſſurance of it, on the authority of Jeſus Chriſt; who condemns, as ſin, the

the evil desires of the heart. The scripture further asserts, "that the thought of foolishness is sin" and "that the commandment is exceeding broad."

Q. May not the Ten commandments, be comprehended in two original precepts?

A. They may. Jesus Christ asserted; that on two commandments, hang all the law, and the prophets.

Q. What is the first of those two commandments.

A. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and the great commandment.

Q. What is the second?

A. The second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Lesson II.

The First Commandment and the Second.

Q. OF the ten commandments, what is the first?

A. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.

Q. What is the meaning of this commandment?

A. That we must acknowledge and worship one God, and him only; the creator, and preserver of all things; and the high possessor of heaven and earth;—who righteously governs all things according to his own will. And that we PREFER no will, or authority, to his.

Q. What reasons are there for this commandment?

A. Many

A. Many and weighty reaſons might be aſſigned. We ſhall give three of peculiar importance.

Q. What is the firſt ?

A. As all things are "before him ;" in his preſence and knowledge ; it is an affront to his Majeſty, to have any other God.

Q. What is the ſecond reason ?

A. He has, and claims a right to our worſhip, and our obedience. To worſhip or obey, any other God, in preference to him, is, therefore, a denial of his right.

Q. What is the third ?

A. By the worſhipping and obeying any other, in preference to him, our hearts would be alienated from him ; ſo that we ſhould neither love him ſincerely nor obey him from our hearts.

Q. What is the ſecond commandment ?

A. Thou ſhalt not make unto thee any graven image, or the likeneſs of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou ſhalt not bow down thyſelf to them, nor ſerve them.

Q. What is the intention of this commandment ?

A. To forbid the making uſe of any image, or picture ; of any natural or artificial thing ! as the immediate object of our worſhip, either as a reſemblance of the Deity, or as a ſymbol of any of his perfections.

Q. Can you give the reaſons of this commandment ?

A. Perhaps not all—But we ſhall mention four.

Q. What is the firſt ?

A. Becauſe the eſſence of the Deity, and the

manner of his being, are utterly unknown to us. We have neither known his face, nor ſeen his ſhape. We have therefore no principle on which ſuch reſemblances can be made, and the attempt to make them muſt lead us at once into error.

Q. What is the ſecond?

A. God is "jealous" of his honor. There is no ſymbol, or reſemblance which will not diſhonor him, by being infinitely inferior to him.

Q. What is the third?

A. To employ ſenſual objects, as reſemblances of the Deity, has a tendency to corrupt our worſhip, by making it an exerciſe of the ſenſual affections, inſtead of ſpiritual devotion.

Q. What is the fourth?

A. The experience of the fact has proved;—That wherever worſhip by images has prevailed,—men's ideas of the Deity have been debaſed;—the wildeſt vagaries of imagination have been indulged; and the morals of the people have been exceedingly corrupted.

Lesson III.

The Third Commandment.

Q. WHAT is the third commandment?

A. Thou ſhalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

Q. In what inſtances is this commandment violated?

A. In the crime of perjury. In profane ſwearing and curſing, in the uſing of oaths or divine names

names in any falſe, trifling, or indecent diſcourſe. In blaſphemous, and reproachful ſpeaking concerning God, religion, divine worſhip, the ſcriptures, ſacraments, or any thing appropriated to religious uſes.

Q. What reaſons are there for this Commandment?

A. The contrary practice tends to deſtroy all reverence for the Deity—to take away all reſpect for teſtimony, though taken in the moſt ſolemn manner, and by ſuch means, to let looſe all the bands of ſocial union; and introduce univerſal impiety, profaneneſs, and diſorder among men.

Q. What are the duties implied in the third commandment?

A. That we entertain in the higheſt degree, love and reverence for the Deity; ſpeak the truth in his name, and for his ſake; and treat every thing with ſingular reſpect, by which, he makes himſelf known to mankind.

Q. What is meant by the threatening annexed to this commandment?

A. That God will aſſuredly puniſh and with ſingular ſeverity thoſe who break this commandment.

Leſſon

Lesson IV.

The Fourth Commandment.

Q. WHAT is the fourth commandment?

A. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Q. Of what events is the ſabbath a memorial?

A. Of two, great and intereſting to mankind—The creation of the world, and the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. How is the Sabbath day a memorial of the creation of the world?

A. From the creation till Chriſt's time, the ſeventh day was the ſabbath: For in ſix days the Lord made heaven and earth—the ſea and all things in them—and he *reſted* on the ſeventh day; wherefore the Lord bleſſed and ſanctified the ſabbath day—as a day of rest, it ſtill refers us to the *reſt* after the creation.

Q. How is it to us a memorial of the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt?

A. Chriſt eſtabliſhed the authority of his doctrine, by riſing from the dead, on the firſt day of the week; which from that event has ſince been called the Lord's day.

Q. What evidence have you of the propriety of changing the ſabbath from the ſeventh day of the week to the firſt.

A. Two days of reſt, in one week are no where required in the ſcripture. The *reſt* of the day is a memorial of creation—its being on the *firſt day* of

of the week, and called the *Lord's day*, makes a memorial of Chriſt's reſurrection. So it anſwers both purpoſes.

Q. And do you think this proof ſufficient.

A. Yes, if we conſider that the diſciples of Chriſt, never taught any but Jews to keep the ſeventh day—They were inſtructed by Jeſus and inſpired by the holy Ghoſt—they devoted the firſt day to religious worſhip—the Chriſtians ſince, with very few exceptions, have kept the Lord's day in all ages, and nations, and all ſtates of the church.

Q. What kinds of work are forbidden on the ſabbath ?

A. All ſervile labour, whether, in agriculture, trades, or commerce. All labour whoſe object is mere gain, ſeeking our own pleaſure in amuſements, as alſo unneceſſary travelling for diverſion, or ſecular purpoſes, on the Lord's day.

Q. What works are permitted on the Sabbath ?

A. Thoſe which are neceſſary to preſerve life and health—all the works of humanity and mercy—all parts of religious worſhip—and which ſpecially tend to the promotion of religion.

Lesson V.

Of Religious Worſhip.

Q. WHAT ſhould be our employment on the Lord's day.

A. Reading and hearing the word of God with prayer, ſtudy and meditation on religious ſubjects—with all ſuitable acts of public and private worſhip.

Q. Is it our duty to attend the public aſſemblies for this purpoſe ?

A. Yes, and to do it devoutly, not offering the ſacrifice of fools.

Q. What is the uſe of religious worſhip ?

A. To produce in our minds a conſtant ſenſe of our dependence on God ; and an habitual regard to him ; and by the exerciſes of holineſs, to prepare us for his heavenly kingdom.—Public worſhip anſwers other purpoſes alſo.

Q. Will you enumerate them ?

A. It were a taſk indeed to enumerate the whole, I ſhall mention four.

Q. What is the firſt ?

A. By means of ſympathy to increaſe devotion, and render it more intense, and permanent—and by means of devotion, to ſtrengthen our ſocial principles.

Q. What is the ſecond ?

A. To improve, and refine, both the tempers, and manners, of human beings ; by preſenting them frequently to each other, in the beſt point of view, while engaged in the beſt actions.

Q. What is the third ?

A. By the refinement which it produces, it becomes the beſt remedy ever yet known, againſt barbariſm, ferocity, and brutality in human manners.

Q. What is the fourth ?

A. It affords the beſt means ever yet diſcovered, for diffuſing the knowlege of religion, and other of the moſt important concerns of men, among the people at large.

Leſſon

Lesson VI.

The fifth Commandment and the sixth.

Q. WHAT is the fifth commandment?

A. Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Q. What is the intention of this commandment?

A. To oblige us to love and revere our parents? and to treat civil rulers, instructors, and all aged persons with due respect according to their relation to us; to be mindful of and practice all duties which we owe to all persons according to those relations which they and we sustain in life.

Q. What reason have you to suppose that civil magistrates, and aged persons are by this commandment entitled to respect?

A. Civil rulers resemble parents, in the lawful command they have over us. Instructors in the office of teaching and giving counsel.—Aged persons resemble parents in their superior age, their experience and ability to give advice, wherefore, we must not treat their persons or opinions with contempt.

Q. What modes of conduct does this commandment forbid and reprove?

A. Disobedience to parents and treating them with indecency or levity—insulting the aged, refusing customary submission and respect to civil magistrates and instructors, the exciting of sedition in the

the State—or endeavoring to make thoſe appear ridiculous and contemptible whom we ought to revere.

Q. Why is it ſaid: That thy days may be long upon the land, &c. ?

A. To encourage all perſons in the duties belonging to this commandment with the hope of a long and pleaſant life, and ſtrike the diſobedient with fear of the contrary.—This addition to the commandment is often verified in fact.

Q. What is the ſixth commandment ?

A. Thou ſhalt not kill.

Q. What is the intention of this commandment ?

A. To forbid murder, or unjuſtly killing a human being, by any means whatever; whether maliciouſly killing a perſon, in the peace of ſociety, killing one's ſelf, duelling, killing by aſſault; or by engaging in exerciſes dangerous to life, or doing any thing tending to deſtroy our own life or that of others, either of ourſelves, or by means of other perſons.

Q. What affections of the mind does this commandment forbid ?

A. All unkind affections, but eſpecially malice, envy, and revenge.

Q. What virtues does it imply ?

A. Benevolence, charity, due attention to the wants, and welfare of our neighbours in every view.

Q. Does not this commandment forbid all war?

A. Not abſolutely. It forbids all except defenſive war; but that it does not forbid; for they who aſſault others have renounced the peace of God,

God, and ſociety, and the violent, muſt be deſtroyed, that the peaceable may live in ſafety.

Lesson VII.

The Seventh Commandment.

Q. WHAT is the ſeventh commandment?

A. Thou ſhalt not commit adultery?

Q. What is forbidden in this commandment?

A. The breaking of the marriage covenant, all lewdneſs in whatever kind or degree; all immodeſt ſpeech and behavior; indulging irregular deſire, or contemplating any thing with approbation, unbecoming the dignity of human nature.

Q. What does it enjoin?

A. Keeping ſtrictly the marriage contract, entire chaſtity and purity of heart, and ſtrict propriety of converſation, and behavior.

Q. Why muſt this commandment be obſerved?

A. For the purpoſe of ſupporting the dignity of the human character in general, ſpecially to maintain order in families, to regulate the deſcent of inheritances, to aſcertain whoſe duty it is to take care of, maintain and educate children.—Chaſtity may alſo be conſidered as the key of all the virtues. They who have not this virtue, ſeldom poſſeſs any other.

Q. Is not the keeping of this commandment neceſſary to the well being of civil ſociety.

A. Moſt certainly. For as marriage is the firſt bond of civil ſociety—and families are its firſt elements—violation of that contract tends moſt of all

all things to the diſſolution of civil ſociety and the univerſal degradation and miſery of the human race.

Lesson VIII.

The Eighth Commandment and the Ninth.

Q. WHAT is the eighth commandment?

A. Thou ſhalt not ſteal.

Q. What is the intention of this commandment?

A. It forbids us to take any thing from our neighbor to which he has a prior right, except by his conſent; or any way to injure him in his property or enjoyments; and requires us to do all in our power, conſiſtent with our own right of property, or enjoyment, to encreaſe the eſtate, and promote the welfare of our neighbour.

Q. Are frauds then forbidden by this commandment?

A. Moſt certainly. Such as repreſenting articles for ſale to be good when they are bad; and warranting them as ſuch. It requires that we deal in trade, on the principle of mutual ſatisfaction and advantage to the parties.

Q. What is the ninth commandment?

A. Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs againſt thy neighbour.

Q. What is forbidden in this commandment?

A. Every inſtance of perjury, eſpecially the giving of falſe teſtimony in courts of juſtice—

ſlander,

ſlander, either by libels, or verbal defamation. Lying either from malice, levity, or officiouſneſs; in a word all violation of the truth.

Q. What virtues are enjoined?

A. Strict truth in witneſs, bearing ſacred regard to oaths and promiſes, carefulneſs to avoid injuring any perſon's character—ſpeaking truth in common converſation, and in every ſenſe a due regard to truth.

Q. Is the obſervance of this commandment of great uſe to men in ſociety.

A. It is, for the whole uſeful INTERCOURSE of human beings depends on the confidence which they have in the veracity of one another.

Lesson IX.

The Tenth Commandment, and Concluſion.

Q. WHAT is the tenth commandment?

A. Thou ſhalt not covet.

Q. What is meant by coveting any thing?

A. To deſire it, though it can never be lawful for us to have it—or when not lawful at the time. To deſire any thing, to exceſs; or to neglect of things more uſeful. Deſire when unlawful, exceſſive or irregular, is covetouſneſs, and is forbidden.

Q. What doth this commandment require?

A. Self government, or the entire command of all our appetites, paſſions, and deſires—that all emotions of body or mind may be ſubject to the law of God, and regulated by his will.

Q. Does any man perfectly keep the commandments of God?

A. No

A. No, all have ſinned and come ſhort of the glory of God.

Q. Will not God puniſh thoſe who break his laws ?

A. He hath denounced his indignation and wrath againſt every ſoul of man that doth evil in this world and the world to come.

Q. And is it poſſible for us to eſcape this dreadful ſentence ?

A. The law brings us to Chriſt ; who is our teacher and ſaviour ; and who informs us of what God requireth of us ; that we may eſcape his indignation and wrath.

Q. And what doth God require ?

A. That we believe in him, and in his ſon Jeſus Chriſt, that we repent of all our ſins, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

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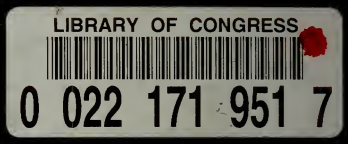
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